

# Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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## Black Out: Technology Drives Cable's Coverage of Solar Eclipse

A total solar eclipse will sweep across 14 states Monday, earning it the moniker the "Great American Eclipse." The moon will pass between the Earth and the sun, with the sun going completely black—in cities like Nashville, KC and Charleston—for almost half an hour. Unlike the sky, cable networks won't be going dark, as they plan to capture every moment through traditional video and more immersive media. "Most people can just pop their head out and see an incredible, natural activity that happens once a lifetime, or once a generation," said **Science Channel** gm *Marc Etkind*. "This one is once in 99 years. It's a pretty cool, incredible event." In addition to airing a special, Science Channel will live stream the eclipse using **Facebook Live** from certain prime viewing locations, including Madras, OR, in partnership with the Lowell Observatory. Science will also send updates throughout the day on digital and social platforms, including a microsite, which will host blog posts, photo galleries and an original eclipse companion guide video series. **CNN's** plans for the eclipse revolve around its boldest VR experience yet. The net plans to produce a live two-hour 360° experience starting at 1pm ET on Monday to show off seven eclipse moments across the country. The content will be available on CNN's website and mobile app, as well as through VR headsets and Facebook Live. CNN is also monetizing the unique occurrence by activating around **Volvo**. Four of the seven live streams will utilize 2018 Volvo XC60s specially outfitted with advanced 360° cameras. Like Science, **Weather Channel** will be a natural destination for many eclipse viewers. The net plans to use live augmented reality to recreate the eclipse and show how it happens. It will rely on technology from Ncam to create 3D graphics and insert talent into the experience. Viewers will even get a close-up view of the eclipse from space through the AR experience, with the programmer teaming with **NASA** for extra feeds. Of course, it'll also provide live on-air coverage, much like it does with hurricanes, blizzards or floods. That means broadcasting from the locations across the country with the best chance for zero cloud cover. Weather will send 10 crews across the country, including in an airplane off the west coast and on a cruise ship in the Atlantic Ocean, according to Weather live programming svp *Nora Zimmert*. "The main event is incredibly exciting with regards to seeing the thing in real life, but we always want to give our viewers a little extra. So we are recreating, live, in-studio, the eclipse and how it happens," she added. On social media, Weather will hold a sweepstakes to give one fan a chance to view the eclipse from an **Alaska Airlines** flight over the Pacific Ocean. Weath-

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er will also offer Facebook Live coverage, but Zimmett believes this is a Super Bowl-like event that lends itself best to the 60-inch TV set. "An event this big really deserves to be seen on a big screen," she said. "Anything this massive, as storm coverage has shown us, people like to really sit and watch it on a large screen." **NASA TV** is also getting in on the action, hosting an eclipse four-hour mega cast that includes insight from NASA scientists.

**Slingdora:** **Sling TV** CEO *Roger Lynch*, who led the launch of the virtual MVPD for **DISH**, is leaving the company to take the CEO position at digital music platform **Pandora**. Lynch, who had been with DISH since 2009 and led the launch of Sling in 2012, will begin in his new role Sept 18. DISH pres/CEO *Erik Carlson* will take over leadership of Sling, effective Aug 31. While DISH does not disclose how many of its customers are using Sling (vs. its traditional video offering), research firm **MoffettNathanson** estimated the vMVPD ended 2Q with 1.45mln subs. **Wells Fargo Securities'** *Marci Ryvicker* on Tuesday downplayed concern that Lynch's departure indicates there is "anything 'wrong' with Sling." She wrote, "We wouldn't characterize Roger's exit as a positive (he has been one of the visionaries for Sling and has a great following). But we don't think this is anything more than a guy transitioning to a higher profile title, likely for more money, and for a relocation back to California."

**Opposition Organizing:** Opponents of the pending **Sinclair-Tribune** merger have formed an alliance called the **Coalition to Save Local Media**. Members include a number of entities that have already voiced their disapproval of the deal, including the **ACA**, **NTCA**, **Competitive Carriers Association**, **Computer and Communications Industry Association**, **AWE** channel, **Cinemoi**, **One America News Network**, **RIDE TV** and **TheBlaze**, among others. The group touts its bipartisan makeup, noting members have previously been on opposite sides of regulatory disputes.

**Comcast Continues DOCSIS 3.1 Rollouts:** **Comcast** is rolling out Gigabit internet service utilizing DOCSIS 3.1 technology in its hometown of Philadelphia, as well as in Baltimore. The service is already deployed in markets like Boston, Chicago, SF, Atlanta and Seattle. Comcast is charging \$104.95/month without a term contract, or a promotional price of \$79.99/month with a 12-month commitment. The Philadelphia rollout also includes Bucks, Montgomery, Chester and Delaware counties. The Baltimore launch includes both the city and county, as well as Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Carroll County, Harford County and Howard County.

**AMC Facing Litigation:** "Walking Dead" co-creator *Robert Kirkman* and exec producers *Gale Anne Hurd*, *Glen Mazzara* and *David Alpert* filed a lawsuit against **AMC Networks**, claiming the company has cheated them out of profits. Noting AMC Network and AMC Studios are part of the same conglomerate, the claim asserts, "AMC has used its vertically-integrated corporate structure to avoid sharing that financial success with the profit participants, including the Plaintiffs." AMC responded in a statement, saying, "We have enormous respect and appreciation for these plaintiffs, and we will continue to work with them as partners, even as we vigorously defend against this baseless and predictably opportunistic lawsuit." The show's other co-creator, *Frank Darabont*, was fired in the middle of last season and has since filed another lawsuit for \$280mln. That case is currently in the summary judgement phase and will go before a New York judge next week.

**Wonder Woman:** **Charter** svp *Deborah Picciolo* is the winner of the 2017 Women in Technology Award, presented by **WICT**, **SCTE-ISBE** and **Cablefax**. The award recognizes a woman who demonstrates outstanding professional achievement and contributes to the advancement of the cable telco industry. See [Cablefax.com](http://Cablefax.com) for more on our honoree.

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